

Summary of the Minutes

December 16, 2013 Meeting

City of Binghamton Shade Tree Commission

PHCD Conference Room, 4th Floor, City Hall

Commissioners Present: Dick Andrus, Julian Shepherd, Joshua De Marree, Carolyn Wilczynski

Commissioners Absent: Bev Rainforth (excused), Lou Sebesta

Staff Liaison: Melissa Enoch

Guests: Artem Treyger (NYSEG)

Minutes for November 18, 2013: Approved with minor revisions

Next Meeting: February 3, 2014 at 7:00 PM City Hall Planning Dept Conference Room

1. **Site plan:** the plan for 439 Court St. considered at the last meeting but not voted on due to lack of a quorum, was approved as submitted.
2. **Fall tree planting:**
 - a) Enoch said that all the fall tree planting had been done, including the trees donated by NYSEG. Treyger said that for various reasons (often utility problems) not all the NYSEG trees had gone in the sites where trees had been removed – Bill Barber has the details. Enoch sent letters to the 8 people whose requests were denied, explaining the reasons for denial, again utility problems or too narrow a utility strip. Andrus asked if overall we were gaining or losing street trees. We know how many are planted each year, but how many are we losing? We guessed that at about 125 trees being planted per year, we are probably roughly breaking even. How many potential spaces are planted? This was estimated very roughly to be 33%. Enoch mentioned that utility strips must have grass to receive plantings, which led to a discussion of returning paved utility strips to grass when the opportunity arises – it is now a violation of code to pave utility strips without permission.
3. **Citizen Pruning Program:**
 - a) Andy Hillman taught a citizen training program on Saturday, December 8. Six people attended, with Andrus and Demarree asking directed questions, which proved useful. Another in-the-field session is planned before spring. Hillman said he would come back to do another pruner training in lieu of the risk assessment training, a requirement of his contract which he cannot fulfill as there is no arborist on the City staff. Enoch said that there are informational booklets on pruning techniques, and she will look into purchasing copies.

4. DEC grant:

- a) One application in the amount \$25,000 was submitted to the DEC for a street tree inventory of 25% of the City. The long-term plan is to inventory the whole City in four phased inventories. The idea of finding/training volunteers to do this was discussed; it was suggested that students might be recruited to do this for course credit, but Andrus thought this unfeasible due to the time necessary to develop the necessary expertise.

5. Membership:

- a) Alex Spencer will be resigning as she has moved to Ithaca. Treyger offered to put himself up to City Council for this position, an offer that was gladly accepted. Andrus will email Lou Sebesta asking for his resignation, as he has not attended meetings recently. It was noted to some surprise that Andrus' term is up on December 31 of this year. Enoch will investigate his reappointment by City Council.